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# Effective Practices for Implementing Local Climate and Energy Programs:

## *Award and Certificate Programs*

### Lessons Learned *by Communities for Communities*

*The views expressed in this document are those of the Climate Showcase Communities grant recipients. U.S. EPA does not endorse any products or commercial services mentioned.*

#### WHAT IS IT?

Award and certificate programs publicly recognize and reward organizations that meet criteria for achieving sustainability goals or win a competition among organizations.

#### WHY DO IT?

- Make program participants feel appreciated.
- Create opportunities to engage the media and increase the visibility of actions that participating organizations are undertaking.
- Inspire healthy competition among businesses and organizations.

#### WHAT WORKS?

- Create a set of clearly defined criteria for awards or certificates.
- Develop a consistent process for nominating and choosing recipients and/or selecting winners of competitions.
- Announce award recipients in a public setting and to the media. Regularly highlight “star” organizations.
- Ask local businesses to donate incentive prizes.
- Hold networking events for recognized organizations to share information.
- Provide window decals or other signage for participating organizations.

#### WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

- Avoid loose or inconsistent certification requirements.
- Ensure that certificates and awards are for meaningful action.
- Consider using a professional printer to produce high-quality certificates. Lower-quality certificates may not convey the intended value to recipients.

#### WHAT RESOURCES HAVE PROJECTS FOUND TO BE USEFUL?

- North Carolina Green Schools Recognition Program: [www.ncgreenschools.org](http://www.ncgreenschools.org)
- Sustainable Jersey: [www.sustainablejersey.com](http://www.sustainablejersey.com)
- Salt Lake City e2 Business Program: [www.slcgov.com/slccgreen/e2](http://www.slcgov.com/slccgreen/e2)



*“Businesses want recognition for their accomplishments. These programs identify them to the community.”*

*Janet, Denver Energy Challenge, Colorado*

*“Hold a public ceremony and give out attractive, professional certificates.”*

*Annie, Mpower ChaMpsions, Madison, Wisconsin*